CONSIDERATIONS

UPON THE

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OF THE

NATION,

As it is affected by the Exceſſive Uſe of *Foreign Spirits.*

EDINBURGH:
Printed in the YEAR, MDCCXXX

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CONSIDERATIONS upon the STATE of the NATION, &c.

BEFORE the Union of the Crowns, whilſt the Seat of Government continued in *Scotland*, the Police of the Country was in ſome Degree taken Care of, Trade under the Inſpection of the Convention of Royal Burrows was look'd after, and the State of our Wealth and Shipping was much more on a Level with that of the neighbouring Nations, than at this Day it is.

BUT the Seat of Government having been removed, political Diſſentions grew into civil Wars, and theſe were followed by

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Heart-burnings and Animoſities, which by the Folly of ſome, and the Craft of others, were wrought up into Parties and Factions, and theſe in their ſeveral Turns ſerved the different Deſigns of ambitious Men, who, intent upon carrying on their own particular Views, loſt Sight entirely of the Intereſts of the Nation, neglected the Fiſhery, the Manufactures and the Trade of the Kingdom, and ſuffered theſe Regulations, which encouraged Induſtry, to loſe their Edge, and to fall into Deſuetude; a Conſequence whereof it was, that our Manufactures decay'd, our Trade languiſh'd, and the Spirit of Induſtry which was fit to ſupport them, was almoſt totally extinguiſhed, at the very Time that the neighbouring Nations, were ſucceſsfully employ'd in extending their Commerce, and gaining advantageous Settlements.

If any one doubts that the Neglect of the Police of this Country for a Century, from the Union of the Crowns to the Union of the Kingdoms, produced that miſerable Condition, in which we now find our ſelves, let him look over all our Royal Burrows, excepting *Glaſgow*, and compare the preſent State of them, with that in which their Ruins ſhow them to have been about that Time, and then let him ſay, what national Calamity

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we have met with, that could have brought us ſo low, other than that Total Neglect of our Police, which left no Diſtinction between Induſtry and Idleneſs.

A juſt Senſe of the Lowneſs of our Circumſtances at the Time of the Union of the Kingdoms, and reaſonable Hopes of mending them by a Communication of Trade with *England*, were the chief Motives that carried forward that Treaty, nor could any Thing have obſtructed the Benefit we wiſhed for, from the Communication of Trade, but the moſt *perverſe* Uſe that ever any People made of ſuch a profer'd Advantage.

In place of minding the Improvement of our Fiſheries, and of thoſe Manufactures for which the Treaty of Union had juſt opened the moſt gainful Market, and by which alone it was poſſible to retrive the deſperate State of the Nation, our People over haſty to be rich, by a Sort of common Conſent, fixed their Views upon the Publick Revenues, as the Fund out of which they were to ſteal their Wealth.

Where foreign Commodities imported might leſſen the Conſumption, and conſequently lower the Value of the Product

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of *England* or its Plantations, the Legiſlature had loaded thoſe Foreign Goods, with high Duties to encourage the Sale of their own, and where their own Product or Manufacture wanted any Encouragement to enable the Merchant to export it, a Bounty proportioned to the Occaſion was given upon Exportation, Regulations founded on this ſingle Principle, that the ſureſt Way to enrich a Nation, is to encreaſe the Exportation of Goods of its own Production and Manufacture, and to leſſen the Importation of ſuch Foreign Goods, as interfere with the Conſumption of its own.

By the high Duty on Foreign Goods, the Price of them when imported run high; if the Importer could unload his Goods without paying Duty, and yet diſpoſe of them at a Price as if he had, it was evident he gained the whole Duty, which in moſt Caſes was *Cent. per Cent.* and in many much higher.

All the little Traders of ſmall Fortunes, and no Morals, jumped immediately at this Bait, whilſt the wealthy and the honeſt Merchants, who did not chuſe to expoſe their Fortunes to the Riſque of Seizure, or their Conſciences to the Temptation of Fraud or

Perjury,

Perjury, were forced to lye by, and turn their Estates out of the Way of Trade, in which they must necessarily be vastly undersold by those Smuglers.

THO' this fraudulent Trade was exceeding gainful at the Beginning to the fortunate Smugler, and tho' that Gain in Appearance was got from the Revenue, (which in the Hearts of Men dissatisfied with the Union) was a thing not much favoured, yet in Reality every Shilling the Smugler got, came out of the Pocket of his Neighbour whom he cheated, by making him pay for the Goods, as if these had payed Duty, and not one Farthing would have been added to the Wealth of the Nation, if the Smuglers had all got Estates by their Trade, their Fortunes could have grown only from the Sale of their Merchandizes at home, for which their Fellow Subjects payed, so that visibly the Nation gained nothing by this Sort of Commerce.

BUT on the other Hand, as most of these Goods bore a high Duty, to the End the Importation of them might be discouraged, because they intervened with the Consumption of our own Product and Manufactures, it could not otherways fall out, but that the filling the Country with these

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Commodities must mar the Consumption of our own, especially if they came to be sold at cheaper Rates than our own could be afforded at, which very soon came to be the Case; when the Nation was, as it now for many Years past has been, overstock'd with those Commodities, whereby the Prices of them have been beat down so low, that the very Smugglers have been universally undone, at the same Time that the Manufacturers at Home are ruined for lack of Vent for their Goods.

As the high Duty on Importation intended for encouraging the Consumption of our own Product, has by this fatal Error, become the Occasion of destroying those Manufactures, which it was designed to support, the Encouragments for Exportation, have by the same Kind of Perverseness, been turned against the Country; great Bounties there were upon the Exportation of Fish cured with foreign Salt, sufficient in honest Hands, to have carried that Trade away from all the Rest of the World, but then the Bounties became the Object of the pyratical Traders Views, all their Care was turned to the forming of false Certificates that should produce Debentures; the Fish was so starved in the Curing, as to be

wreck-

wrecked at the foreign Market, to the Diſgrace of our Fiſherie, or to be flung over Board, to earn the Drawback; but ſtill the Exporter found his Account in the Bounty, which came out of the Pocket of his Fellow Subjects, as it was payable out of Revenues that ariſe by publick Taxes.

THUS has this poor Country been deſtroyed by the pernicious Abuſe of the very Means that were intended for its Support. But what is more aſtoniſhing, and reflects as much on the Underſtanding of the People, as thoſe Frauds do upon the Morals of the unhappy Traders engaged in them, this ruinous Commerce never could have been carried on, had not the Nation in general, from miſtaken Notions of publick Utility, and from a falſe Tenderneſs for thoſe clandeſtine Traders, given them, that Aid and Countenance, which made it poſſible for them to get the Better of the Vigilance and Care of the Publick, and to go on ſecurely with a Trade, that has reduced the Country to the laſt Extremity, as well as it has deſtroyed almoſt every Smuggler, that has continued in it for any Time.

IF the Country People had not been ſo aiding in the running and concealing of Goods;

had they been leſs aſſiſting in Reſcues; had they been more clear ſighted when they were aſſembled in Juries, the fair Trader who would have been contented with moderate Gain, might have continued his Buſineſs, the Produce and Manufactures of the Country would have bore a Price, and the Money with-held from the Purchaſe of foreign Commodities for Home Conſumption, muſt have been profitably employed, in augmenting ſo far our own Product, as to anſwer our own Demands, and even to ſupply our Neighbours; but as the Country in general took the contrary Ply, ſmuggling became as faſhionable as any other Vice, and he who contributed the moſt to diſtreſs the Nation by running Goods, in Prejudice of its Manufactures, became the Chief Favourite of the People.

SHOULD this unhappy Turn in the Minds of the People laſt, the beſt contrived Laws may produce ſome Examples of Severity, but can never throughly cure the Evil: But if the Eyes of Mankind ſhall luckily be ſo opened as to perceive, that they are nurſing up, and foſtering Deſtruction to themſelves, by the Protection they afford to this pernicious Traffick, it is to be hoped, the Miſ-

Miſchief will not out-live one Hour the Alteration of the Sentiments of the Nation.

FOR this Reaſon, waving for the preſent the numerous Inconveniencies that attend ſeveral Branches of our Manufacture, from the running of different Sorts of foreign Commodities, it may not be improper to expoſe to the Publick, at one View, ſome of the many Evils that affect the Country, from *one Branch only* of this clandeſtine Trade; and that is the running of foreign Spirits.

IT is a known Propoſition, that Grain is by much the moſt conſiderable Product of *Scotland*, the greateſt Part of the Rent of the Nation is paid in Grain; and the Farmer has ſcarce any other Reſource for ſupporting himſelf, and providing his Children, but the Hopes of a plentiful Increaſe, and a good Market.

AS *Scotland* commonly produces more Grain than is ſufficient to feed its Inhabitants, when the Surplus is not exported or manufactured at Home, the Market is clogg'd, and the Price falls, to the very great Prejudice of thoſe that are ſtock'd with that Commodity.

WHAT chiefly ſupports the Price of Grain, is the converting it into Beer, Ale, and Spirits, which at the ſame Time that it pays the Farmer for his Labour, ſupplies in ſo far the Want of Foreign Liquors, and hinders the Exportation of Bullion, for the Purchaſe of what we have no real Occaſion for, and what long Experience has taught us we may very well diſpenſe with.

THE high Duty on Brandy and other Foreign Spirits, originally intended for a Sort of Prohibition, had, as has been obſerved, a contrary Effect: The Temptation corrupted almoſt all the Dealers, who, not aware of the Conſequence, run headlong into that fraudulent Trade, and in a very few Years ſo *over-did* the Buſineſs, and ſo crowded the Market, that to anſwer the Foreign Bills that came upon them for their Price, they were forced to ſell generally at very low Prices, and ſometimes under the prime Coſt; the Conſequence whereof, beſides certain Ruin to the Adventurers, was, That thoſe Spirits were ſold cheaper in Retail than our own, and were therefore commonly uſed, where our Home Spirits formerly prevail'd, to the unavoidable Diſcouragement of our Diſtillery, and frequently were reſorted to by the Yeomanry, who ſupplied the Room of ſtrong

Beer

Beer and Ale, in their merry Makings, by *Brandy-Punch*, which, on the Main, came to be cheaper than *Beer* and *Ale*, the Product of their own Farms.

THE Miſchief ariſing from this deſtructive Trade was leſs ſenſible, whilſt the Demand for our Grain at the *London* Market, for the Uſes of the Diſtillery laſted: But now, that by the Stop put to the exceſſive Uſe of *Geneva*, that Demand is at an End, our Grain is become a mere Drugg upon our Hands; its Value, and conſequently the Value of almoſt every Man's Lands in the Country, is fallen this Year above one Fourth; and if the Proſpect we have of a plentiful Harveſt anſwer, muſt fall a great Deal more the next; becauſe, on the Suppoſition, that Brandy ſhall continue on the Foot it now is, no Hopes are left of conſuming any more of our Grain, than we at preſent uſe in *Ale* or *Spirits*; and a Reflexion hereafter to be made will ſhow, that the Price is not likely to be raiſed by Exportation.

THE Uſe then of Brandy amongſt us affects the Nation greatly, in two different Reſpects, the one, as by hindering the Conſumption of our own Growth, it lowers the Value of it; the other, as (being a Foreign Com-

Commodity) it drains us of all the ready Money employed in the Purchaſe of it, which Money might be more uſefully beſtowed, in Improving and Exporting thoſe Manufactures, that in Return would bring us ready Money.

LET it upon the moſt moderate Computation be ſuppoſed, that Brandy in the Purchaſe coſts *Scotland* L. 20000 *per annum*, which every Body muſt agree might be ſaved. And let it be ſuppoſed, that the ſame Sum of *L.* 20000 were employed at Home, in the Purchaſe of Grain, to be brewed and diſtilled, to ſupply the Uſes to which Brandy is now put; it cannot be denied, that ſo much Money brought to the Market, to purchaſe Grain, would raiſe the Price; as it is ſelf-evident, that ſo much Money ſaved to the Country, would be ſo much gained to its Wealth, and would prevent in ſome Degree that Conſumption, of which it is ready to periſh.

WERE no other Reflexions to be made but theſe, the moſt prejudiced might be convinced, how detrimental this ſhameful Commerce is, and how highly it behoves the Country to put an End to it. But there are ſome other Conſiderations, which entred upon with the ſmalleſt Degree of Attention, muſt

muſt convince every thinking Man, that if the Nation do not immediately exert itſelf, ſudden Ruin muſt follow.

As the chief Branches of the Revenue are the Cuſtoms and Exciſe, and as Brandy pays no Duty at Importation, at the ſame Time that the extravagant Uſe of it prevents Malting, and the Brewing and Diſtilling of Exciſeable Liquors, the Decreaſe of the Revenue is evidently owing to the Running of Brandy, and it muſt continue low, whilſt the free Uſe of that Commodity, hinders *Malting*, *Brewing* and *Diſtilling*.

The Undetaking now on Foot for Improving *Fiſheries* and *Manufactures*, &c. and which promiſes at leaſt more ſubſtantial Benefit to the Nation, than any Thing that has been attempted ſince the Union of the Crowns, is bottomed upon ſome Funds, to ariſe from the Surplus of the Malt-duty, and of ſome other Revenues.

By the exceſſive Uſe of Brandy, malting is ſo much decreaſed, and the Exciſe is ſo much diminiſhed, that there are no Hopes of any Surplus from either, ſo long as Brandy is at the Rate it now bears; and the neceſſary Conſequence muſt be that the whole

Scheme

Scheme of Improvements, after ſuch ſhewing to the Nation, that it was poſſible for it to thrive, muſt evaniſh, with conſiderable Loſs to ſuch as were publick ſpirited enough, to lay out Part of their Stock, in Attempts towards Manufacture, and without any Hopes of ſeeing ought of the ſame Nature, ſet on Foot again in our Days.

WHEREAS if by diſcouraging the Uſe of Foreign Spirits we could encourage Brewing and Diſtilling at home, the Malt Duty and Exciſe could not fail to produce ſuch Surpluſes as, beſides perfecting what is already with ſo fair a Proſpect begun, would enable the Truſtees for Improvements, to introduce new Branches of Manufacture, the only Mean of recovering this Nation from that miſerable State in which at preſent it finds itſelf.

TO this Conſideration on the State of the Revenue as it affects our Manufactures, it may not be improper to add this further Reflection, that ſo long as it continues ſo low, the Land-lords and Farmers in *Scotland*, cannot hope to raiſe the Price of their Grain, by any other Mean than that of diſuſing *Brandy*. Whilſt the Revenue was able to bear the Expence, a Bounty was due upon Exportation,

tion, under the Favour of which, when Grain bore a ſmall Price at home, Men were encouraged to carry it into Foreign Countries; But in the preſent Condition of the Revenue, ſhould any conſiderable Quantity be exported, there is not Money enough wherewithal to pay the Bounty; and the Quality of our Grain is generally ſo mean, that it cannot bear the Expence of Exportation, without ſome Encouragement from the Publick.

It is too obvious to require any particular Reflection in this Place, that the Bounty on the Exportation of Fiſh, muſt be in the like Circumſtances, if ſome effectual Remedy is not timeouſly found out, and what Diſtreſs the Ruin of the Fiſhery, added to the lowering the Value of our Grain, muſt bring upon this exhauſted Country, is very unpleaſant as well as unneceſſary to deſcribe.

When one attends to the immenſe Miſchief that the villainous Trade of running *Brandy* carries alongſt with it, to this poor Land, and conſiders at the ſame Time, what has been already obſerved, that nothing does or can protect that Trade, but the Countenance and Encouragement it meets with from the People, it is very natural to enquire, whether it is the Intereſt of any of the Peo-

ple to protect it? and what Proportion theſe bear, to thoſe to whom it is extremely prejudicial?

To begin then with the Men of Eſtates, and Landlords over all the Kingdom, nothing can be more detrimental to them than what lowers the Value of their Eſtates ſo greatly, as the hindering the Home-conſumption of Grain does.

The Farmers, and the Yeomanry in general, are in the ſame Circumſtances, with this Difference, That they cannot ſo eaſily bear the ſinking of the Value of their Grain, as Men of Fortune can; and ſure none of them is ſo ſimple, as to put the Pleaſure of drinking of *Brandy* or *Punch*, in Competition with the Support and Proviſion of their Families, when they are aware, that it is the exceſſive Uſe of that Commodity, that leſſens the Value of the Produce of their Farms.

The trading Part of the Nation, ſituate in Royal Burrows, come next under Conſideration; to them, could their Intereſt be disjoined from the Intereſts of the Nation, the Matter might be indifferent; and could they ſhare as advantagiouſly

tagiouſly as other People do, of the Benefit acruing by the Fraud, they might be under ſome Temptation to favour it; But as their Intereſts are ſo nearly allied with thoſe of the Country, as the fair Dealers amongſt them are driven out of the Circle of Commerce, and as all the Sweets of the ſmuggling Trade fall into the Hands of Outliers, who have many Opportunities of running their Goods ſafer, and at a ſmaller Expence, upon the unguarded Coaſts, than Burghers have at their Ports, ſo that they within Burgh have nothing left them but to retail the *Brandy* run by the Country Importers; it is pretty plain they are not in Intereſt concerned to ſupport a deſtructive Trade, by which they ſuffer in ſo many other Reſpects.

The only Set of Men who can be juſtly ſuſpected of entertaining ſo much as a Wiſh, for continuing this abominable Commerce, are the Outliers upon the Coaſt, who have turned the whole of their Stocks that Way, and who, notwithſtanding the Ruin of almoſt every Individual, who has for ten Years together followed that Trade, yet fooliſhly flatter themſelves, that they ſhall have better Luck;

what Tenderneſs is due to ſuch Men may be afterwards conſidered: But ſurely thoſe Conceits, by which they, as well as the Nation, are undone, are not to be put in Balance, with the Intereſt of the whole.

THE Cauſe of publiſhing theſe Reflections at preſent, is a firm Perſwaſion, that as the Countenance of the People gave Birth to the ſmuggling Trade, and is what alone ſupports it, it is ſtill in the Power of the People to knock it on the Head, and to avoid even at this Time the Deſtruction that attends it, if they can be but throughly convinced how deeply the Nation is concerned in Intereſt to put an End to it, and that by a Method extreamly natural and exceeding harmleſs.

SUPPOSING the Gentlemen of Eſtates, over the Kingdom in their ſeveral Counties, and the Magiſtrates and capital Burgeſſes in each City and Burgh, ſhould come to unanimous Reſolutions, after a Day certain to be fixed, not to purchaſe or drink any *Brandy*, nor to drink any other Liquour in any Tavern, Inn, or Change-houſe, where any *Brandy* was to be ſold, I dare ſay no Retailer of Liquor would

would be ſo hardy, as to keep any *Brandy* in his Houſe, tho' he were afraid of no other Conſequence, but that alone of looſing his Cuſtomers, and yet every Body can foreſee a great many more Dangers ſuch a Man would have to graple with, ſhould he think fit to ſet up for a Retailer of *Brandy*, in Oppoſition to the Spirit of the People.

THE Reaſon of limiting a Day certain for abſtaining from the Uſe of *Brandy*, is to comply with the Tenderneſs of thoſe, who becauſe of the Prevalency of the publick Opinion hitherto, might think it a Hardſhip, to commence, (without any previous Declaration) Hoſtilities againſt the Importers and Retailers of Foreign Spirits, by which they might be abſolutely undone, without allowing them ſome reaſonable Space to diſpoſe of their Stock on Hand, either by Conſumption at home, or by Exportation.

AND if ſuch a Reſolution were unanimouſly taken and publiſhed, it ſeems to be certain, no Inn-keeper or Victualer would purchaſe *Brandy* for Retail, tho' imported, and for that Reaſon, that no Smuggler would play the Fool ſo groſly,

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as to import any, which again could not fail of inviting Brewers and Diſtillers, to make larger Proviſion than formerly they were wont, for ſupplying the Room of *Brandy*, with Beer, Ale, and Spirits of our own Manufacture.

THE Prudence of our Anceſtors, lodged the Care and Direction of Commerce, in the Hands of the General Convention of Royal Burrows, who, of all others, are the moſt deeply intereſted in its Proſperity. Should the preſent Convention take the Calamities that ariſe from this Branch of the ſmuggling Trade, under their Conſideration, and propoſe any effectual Remedy, it is not to be doubted, that the Country Gentlemen, whoſe Concern it moſt particularly is, will, with Pleaſure, fall in with whatever they ſhall deviſe, and in ſo laudable an Undertaking, Succeſs cannot fail to crown their Labours.

ACT discouraging the importing of Brandy and foreign Spirits.

At *Edinburgh* the Tenth Day of *July* 1730.

THE General Convention of the Royal Burrows of *Scotland*, having taken under their Consideration, the many pernicious Effects of the clandestine Importation, and open and excessive Consumption of Brandy within *Scotland*, and it appearing evidently to them, that great Sums of Money are yearly exported for purchasing this unnecessary Commodity, which being run, without Payment of Duty, is sold cheaper than Spirits distilled in *Scotland* can be afforded for, and is therefore universally used, to the total

total Diſcouragement of the Diſtillery at Home, and to the leſſening the Price of the Grain of this Country, which were it manufactured and uſed in Spirits, might fully ſupply the room of Brandy, and all other foreign Spirits, and ſave ſo great an Expence of Money to the Nation. It appearing alſo to the Convention that the common and exceſſive Uſe of Brandy, which pays no Duty, by hindering the manufacturing Grain into Beer, Ale and Spirits, reduces greatly the publick Revenues, and thereby narrows the Funds, out of which all Bounties and Allowances for Exportation of Fiſh and Corn are payable, and by the Overpluſſes whereof, the Plan for promoting Fiſheries and Manufactures in *Scotland*, can alone be carried into Execution; And it appearing further to the Convention, that the conſtant Frauds committed in the running Trade have been extremely noxious to the fair Dealers, and have forced them to leave off Buſineſs, at the ſame Time that it grieves the Convention to ſee the unwary People that deal in that unlawful Commerce, employ their whole Stock and Induſtry in a Trade, which ſeldom turns out to their own Advantage, and infallibly muſt end (if continued) in the Ruin of the Country, in place of employing their Abilities, and their Fortunes in ſearch of honeſt

neſt Gains, by encreaſing, purchaſing and exporting the Product and Manufacture of the Kingdom: Do therefore, in the moſt earneſt manner, recommend it to all the Royal Burows, and to all the Burghs of Regality and Barony, who have accepted the Communication of Trade, and to the whole Inhabitants within the ſame, as they regard the Welfare of their Country, the preſerving the Bullion within the Nation, the Proſperity of Trade, the Support and Maintenance of Fiſheries and Manufactures, and do charge and require them, and each of them, that without Loſs of Time, they do forthwith apply themſelves, by all lawful Means whatſomever, to ſtop, and effectually to hinder the further clandeſtine Importation of Brandy and other foreign Spirits; and that they do, within their ſeveral Burghs, as ſoon as conveniently may be, conſult, concert, deviſe and put in Execution, ſuch Meaſures and Means, conſiſtent with the Laws, as may moſt effectually diſcourage and prevent the uſing, vending and retailing for the future ſuch Brandies and other foreign Spirits, clandeſtinely run as aforeſaid; And that each of the ſaid Burrows, do give Notice, as ſoon as poſſible, to the annual Committee, who are to be appointed to ſit after the diſſolving of this Convention, of what they ſhall have deviſed, concerted

and done as aforesaid, in Consequence of this Recommendation, and what Success their Measures shall have had, and to correspond with, and receive Advice and Directions from Time to Time from the said annual Committee concerning the same. Extracted forth of the Records of the Convention, by me *George Home* General Clerk to the Burrows.

GEORGE HOME.